

JUNE 19, 1976

LEBANON DEVELOPMENTS

ANNCR:

NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN EXAMINES THE TRAGIC SITUATION IN LEBANON IN THE CONTEXT OF VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION.

VOICE:

THE POSTPONEMENT OF A CONVOY OF FOREIGN NATIONALS--INCLUDING AMERICANS--LEAVING BEIRUT FOR DAMASCUS UNDERLINES WHAT HAS FOR WEEKS BEEN A CHAOTIC SITUATION IN LEBANON. THE CONVOY WAS TO HAVE LEFT BEIRUT SATURDAY BUT DANGEROUS CONDITIONS ALONG THE ROADS TO DAMASCUS FORCED THE POSTPONEMENT. HOWEVER, THE CONVOY IS EXPECTED TO LEAVE SUNDAY--PROVIDED SECURITY CONDITIONS PERMIT.

THE SITUATION IN LEBANON IS CENTRAL TO THE CONCERN FELT IN MANY CAPITALS--THOSE OF ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS, IN PARIS, IN WASHINGTON AND OTHERS. HERE IN WASHINGTON THE SENSE OF OUTRAGE OCCASIONED BY WEDNESDAY'S MURDER IN BEIRUT OF AMERICAN AMBASSADOR MELOY, ECONOMIC COUNSELLOR WARING AND THEIR LEBANESE CHAUFFEUR, MISTER MOGHRABI, WAS HEIGHTENED AND MIXED WITH SORROW WITH THE (EXPECTED) ARRIVAL SATURDAY OF THE BODIES OF THE TWO DIPLOMATS FOR BURIAL IN THIS COUNTRY.

THOSE MURDERS ALSO HAVE HEIGHTENED THE SENSE OF URGENCY AMONG SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS SEEKING TO END THE DEVASTATION AND KILLING IN LEBANON. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER TOLD CONGRESS THURSDAY THAT DESPITE THE MURDERS, UNITED STATES EFFORTS ALONG THOSE LINES WOULD CONTINUE WITH UNDIMINISHED FIRMLINESS. HE CALLED FOR SEVERE AND DRASTIC PUNISHMENT OF THE MURDERERS, BUT ALSO SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES IS DETERMINED TO PURSUE THE COURSE IT HAS SET ITSELF IN LEBANON ALL DURING ITS BLOODY CIVIL WAR.

THAT IS WHY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IS STILL FUNCTIONING IN BEIRUT. THE AMERICAN AIM, SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID, IS TO END THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON AND THE SUFFERING OF ITS PEOPLE. ANOTHER PRIMARY AIM OF THE UNITED STATES IS TO PREVENT THE LEBANESE CONFLICT FROM SPILLING OVER THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY'S BORDERS. AS WASHINGTON SEES IT, THAT WOULD DISRUPT AMERICAN EFFORTS TO SERVE AS WHAT DOCTOR KISSINGER CALLED "AN HONEST BROKER" BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL AND OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST EQUATION.

SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD IS BACK IN DAMASCUS, WHERE HE IS INFORMING OTHER SYRIAN OFFICIALS ABOUT HIS JUST-CONCLUDED VISIT TO PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING IN PARIS. BOTH MEN IN THE COURSE OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS SAID THEIR AIM WAS TO FIND A PEACE FORMULA FOR LEBANON THAT WILL END THE CONFLICT THERE AND RE-ESTABLISH ORDER. AND PRESIDENT ASSAD TOLD A FRENCH TELEVISION INTERVIEWER THAT SYRIA NOW FAVORS THE USE OF A PAN-ARAB PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN LEBANON. HOWEVER, AS OF NOW, THERE IS NO SIGN THAT LEBANON'S MOSLEM LEFTISTS AND THEIR PALESTINIAN ALLIES WOULD ACCEPT SYRIA'S INCLUSION IN SUCH A FORCE.

AT ANY RATE, WASHINGTON, PARIS, DAMASCUS, OTHER ARAB CAPITALS AND TEL AVIV HAVE GIVEN EVIDENCE THAT THEY DO NOT WANT THE LEBANESE CONFLICT TO ENGULF THE MIDDLE EAST IN A GENERAL WAR. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE CAREFUL DIPLOMACY NOW GOING ON AMONG ALL THOSE CAPITALS MUST BE VIEWED.